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AUTHOR Cleary, Robert E.
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to isolate academic, financial, and social policy areas on which there was agreement/disagreement on the appropriate division of authority between college trustees and college presidents. Additional objectives were to examine the views of trustees and presidents concerning the policy and administrative aspects of these issues, and evolve recommendations for trustees and presidents that might aid them in the development of more cooperative working relationships. Responses to a 16-item questionnaire completed by 61 college and university board chairmen and 60 presidents indicate that trustees play a stronger role in institutional decisions in small private colleges with large boards and a lesser role in large public institutions with small boards, especially if the latter are community colleges or have a new president. The comments of respondents signify that conclusions about institutional factors affecting board-president relations must be set in a framework that considers personality and the need for mutual trust and respect between the board chairman and the president. (SW)

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INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING

TRUSTEE - PRESIDENT AUTHORITY RELATIONS

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Robert E. Cleary
The American University

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Washington, D.C., March 4-5, 1980.

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INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING

TRUSTEE - PRESIDENT AUTHORITY RELATIONS

Abstract

Analysis of the responses to a sixteen-item questionnaire completed by sixty-one college and university board chairmen and sixty presidents indicates that trustees play a stronger role in institutional decisions in small private colleges with large boards and a lesser role in large public institutions with small boards, especially if the latter are community colleges or have a new president.

The comments of respondents on their questionnaires signify, however, that conclusions about institutional factors affecting board-president relations must be set in a framework that takes into account personality and the need for mutual trust and respect between the board chairman and the president.

Background

An examination of trustee and presidential opinion on authority relationships between college and university presidents and their boards of trustees can aid in achieving a clearer understanding than now exists of the respective roles, obligations, and responsibilities of administrators and boards at a time of change in American higher education. Most discussions of presidential and trustee authority in colleges and universities are general in nature. They usually conclude that the board determines policy while the president is responsible for the overall administration and management of the institution and the execution of trustee policies. Given the difficulty of separating the policy component from the administrative aspect of controversial questions, distinctions clarifying the policy role of boards and the managerial and administrative role of the president are not common. Specific guidelines for decisionmaking are exceptions rather than the rule. As a result, the conceptual underpinning and even the information base for campus understanding of the role of administrative versus trustee policymaking lacks substance.

Most students of political science and public administration have argued in recent years that policy and administration are intertwined rather than separate. As Herbert Simon has pointed out, "[nowhere] ... have any clear-

cut criteria or marks of identification been suggested that would enable one to recognize a 'policy question' on sight, or to distinguished it from an 'administrative question'."[1]

Many issues involve both policy and administration. The question of creating a new school or program may be policy, but the staffing and organization of the unit is administrative in nature. A budget decision may be administratively routine, but it may also implicitly include a policy commitment to a new or expanded department or program.

Thus a general distinction between policy and administration cannot be drawn with precision. Nevertheless, the clarification of trustee-president authority relationships is certainly possible. It was on the basis of this assumption that the author constructed a sixteen-item questionnaire (see appendix) that was completed in the fall of 1978 by sixty-one college and university board chairmen and sixty presidents in six Middle Atlantic states. The survey respondents were asked to declare whether each questionnaire item should be dealt with primarily by the president or by the board and whether it was policy or administrative in nature. They were also requested to add whatever explanatory comments concerning their responses they deemed appropriate. Finally, each responding president and trustee was asked to identify himself or herself with regard to number of years in office, size of the institution,

nature of control of the institution, level of the program offerings, size of the governing board, and whether the institution was part of a multi-campus system. The writer hoped to utilize the information on the returned questionnaires to (1) isolate academic, financial and social policy areas on which there was agreement as well as those on which there was disagreement on the appropriate division of authority between trustees and college presidents, (2) examine the views of trustees and presidents concerning the policy and administrative aspects of these issues, and (3) evolve recommendations for trustees and presidents that might aid them in the development of more cooperative working relationships.

The Questionnaire Results

The substantive results of the questionnaire survey were summarized in the Educational Record[2] in the spring of 1979. Presidents and board chairmen tended to agree on their answers on slightly more than half the sixteen items, but differed on the remainder. Disagreements about the role of trustees emerged on the social questions of birth control policy and dormitory curfews, on the financial questions of board responsibility in the early stages of the annual budgetmaking process and the possibility of a separate trustee review and audit of the institutional budget, and on the president's and the board's role in the appointment of a dean when the appointment is controversial.

The writer has now analyzed the completed questionnaires with regard to the experience of the respondents and the nature of the institutions represented. Tables I through IV summarize these results.

. Presidents and chairmen of public institutions have a greater propensity to term a matter administrative in nature and to state that the president rather than the board should act on it than do their counterparts in private institutions.

. Presidents working with large boards (especially boards over 30) are more likely to term a matter policy and less likely to wish to act on it as contrasted with other presidents. The responses of chairmen tend to be in the same direction as those of presidents.

. New presidents (up to 6 years experience) have a greater tendency to term a matter administrative in nature and to declare they should act on it. Their more experienced counterparts are less assertive. The newest trustees and those with the most experience (over 20 years) show a slightly greater tendency to support presidential action than other trustees do.

. The community college indicators are weak because of the small number of respondents, but participating two-year presidents are clearly more inclined to term an item administrative in nature and to assert they should act on

TABLE I

Should the President (or the Board) Act on a Campus Problem?
(Total of individual responses to questions)

Presidents Responding by Category	President Support Score		Board Support Score	
Public	286	73.1%	105	26.9%
Private	358	67.7%	171	32.3%
Board under 10	114	77.0%	34	23.0%
10-20	178	68.2%	83	31.8%
20-30	170	68.0%	80	32.0%
Board over 30	183	69.8%	79	30.2%
Under 1000 students	152	70.0%	65	30.0%
1000-5000	283	68.0%	133	32.0%
5000-10,000	68	74.7%	23	25.3%
Over 10,000	141	71.9%	55	28.1%
1-3 yrs. exp.	189	72.7%	71	27.3%
4-6	171	71.0%	70	29.0%
7-9	78	72.9%	29	27.1%
10-12	108	69.2%	48	30.8%
13-15	21	65.6%	11	34.3%
16-19	43	68.3%	20	31.7%
over 20 yrs.	29	59.2%	20	40.8%
2 yr. insts.	102	76.7%	31	23.3%
4 yrs. and up	542	69.0%	243	31.0%

Affirmative responses on questions #1 - #6 and negative responses on questions #7 - #16 constitute the presidential support score; negative responses on questions #1-#6 and affirmative responses on questions #7 - #16 constitute the board support score.

N = 60.

TABLE II

Is a Matter Policy or Administration?
(Total of Individual Responses to Questions)

Presidents Responding, by Category	President Support Score (It is Administrative)		Board Support Score (It is Policy)	
Public	129	38.2%	209	61.8%
Private	215	50.0%	215	50.0%
Board under 10	52	38.8%	82	61.2%
10-20	80	36.5%	139	63.5%
20-30	73	39.5%	112	60.5%
Board over 30	139	60.4%	91	39.6%
Under 1000 students	88	47.1%	99	52.9%
1000-5000	141	43.8%	181	56.2%
5000-10,000	26	31.7%	56	68.3%
Over 10,000	89	50.3%	88	49.7%
1-3 yrs. exp.	89	39.4%	137	60.6%
4-6	90	41.5%	127	58.5%
7-9	44	46.3%	51	53.7%
10-12	53	43.1%	70	56.9%
13-15	12	75.0%	4	25.0%
16-19	31	57.4%	23	42.6%
Over 20 yrs.	25	67.6%	12	32.4%
2-yr. insts.	48	38.4%	77	61.6%
4-yrs. and up	296	46.0%	347	54.0%

N=60

TABLE III

Should the President (or the Board) Act on a Campus Problem?

Chairmen Responding, by Category	President Support Score		Board Support Score	
Public	346	66.8%	172	33.2%
Private	254	62.3%	154	37.7%
Board under 10	122	68.5%	56	31.5%
10-20	221	64.8%	120	35.2%
20-30	104	59.8%	70	40.2%
Board over 30	129	59.2%	89	40.8%
Under 1000 students	115	60.8%	74	39.2%
1000-5000	234	63.4%	135	36.6%
5000-10,000	92	68.7%	42	31.3%
Over 10,000	149	68.7%	68	31.3%
1-3 yrs. exp.	65	71.4%	26	28.6%
4-6	119	63.6%	68	36.4%
7-9	99	63.9%	56	36.1%
10-12	127	65.8%	66	34.2%
13-15	48	60.8%	31	39.2%
16-19	52	66.7%	26	33.3%
Over 20 yrs.	70	65.4%	37	34.6%
2-yr. insts.	101	63.1%	59	36.9%
4-yrs. and up	498	65.1%	267	34.9%

N = 61

TABLE IV

Is a Matter Policy or Administration?

Chairmen Responding, by Category	President Support Score (It is Administrative)		Board Support Score (It is Policy)	
Public	176	43.3%	230	56.7%
Private	161	48.8%	169	51.2%
Board under 10	65	41.9%	90	58.1%
10-20	127	46.4%	147	53.6%
20-30	52	46.8%	59	53.2%
Board over 30	93	47.4%	103	52.6%
Under 1000 students	72	44.4%	90	55.6%
1000-5000	147	46.8%	167	53.2%
5000-10,000	41	45.6%	49	54.4%
Over 10,000	77	45.3%	93	54.7%
1-3 yrs. exp.	31	48.4%	33	51.6%
4-6	64	51.2%	61	48.8%
7-9	58	42.0%	80	58.0%
10-12	74	46.0%	87	54.0%
13-15	34	45.3%	41	54.7%
16-19	27	36.5%	47	63.5%
Over 20 yrs.	42	49.4%	43	50.6%
2-yr. insts.	52	37.4%	87	63.6%
4-yrs. and up	285	47.7%	312	52.3%

N = 61

it, with their chairmen tending to agree on the administrative dimension.

. The returns on the size of the institution are not consistent or conclusive, although board chairmen in smaller institutions (under 5000 students) do show a greater inclination to oppose presidential action.

. The returns on the impact of a multi-campus situation are too few in number to be meaningful.

In summary presidents are more likely to assume responsibility for administrative action on a campus problem if they are relatively new in office and/or are serving in an institution which possesses most of the following characteristics: is public, two-year in nature, perhaps relatively large in size, and has a small board of trustees. Conversely, trustees are more inclined to claim policy responsibility and to oppose presidential action if they are middle-range in experience and/or serving in institutions that are private, four years or more in nature, and somewhat smaller in size, particularly if the board is a large one.

Significance of the Questionnaire Results

How significant are these results? In order to answer this question, a Yule's Q test was employed to measure the association of each institutional or experiential characteristic with the degree of presidential or board support

on every questionnaire item. In addition, the survey data were subjected to an analysis of variance to determine the extent to which significant differences exist among trustees and presidents on each characteristic.

Yule's Q is a measure of the association of two characteristics to each other. Two institutional factors on the questionnaire -- those dealing with community colleges and multi-campus institutions -- do not have sufficient respondents to produce a meaningful response as to president or board support scores on the Yule's Q test. An examination of the remaining characteristics indicates weak but meaningful relationships by size of board (presidents on "should"questions and on the policy/administration dimension), years in office (presidents on policy/administration), and whether the institution is public or private (presidents on policy/administration). A value of .205 (on a scale of 1.0 to -1.0) indicates that a moderate association exists between the size of the board and presidential selection of a presidential action role, with presidents in institutions with boards up to ten members in size being more likely to indicate a belief they should act on campus problems. In examining the relationship between the size of the board and presidential claims of administrative responsibility, the obtained Yule's Q of .369 suggests that presidents working with boards under thirty are more inclined to claim

such responsibility. Beyond this, presidents with less than six years experience are more likely to claim administrative responsibility (a value of .207), as are presidents in public institutions (a value of .237).

When the relationships between presidential and board support scores and the public/private factor, years in office, level of program offerings, or whether the institution is part of a multi-campus system are subjected to an analysis of variance, the obtained values of F (ANOVA) are not statistically significant. However, the results do indicate significant differences (at a level of .05) among trustee respondents on institutional size and size of board. The obtained value for F on trustee responses by institutional enrollment is 4.19. The critical value of F for two and sixty-three degrees of freedom is 3.15. The fact that the obtained value exceeds the critical value is evidence of significant variations among boards in institutions of disparate sizes as to how trustees view presidential action on major campus problems. At the same time, trustee responses by size of board indicate significant differences on the policy/administration dimension of the survey ($F = 3.70$, $2/63$ df, $p = < .05$. This result supports the association found on Yule's Q with regard to the influence of board size on attitudes toward presidential action on campus issues.

While structural factors and institutional characteristics do not dominate the trustee-president relationship, certain factors seem to affect it materially. Why is this so? Can the findings presented here be explained?

The Nature of Control of the Institution: Public v. Private

The public/private factor is a central dimension of the board-president relationship. Public institution presidents and board chairmen responding to the survey questionnaire are more inclined to support the presidential resolution of a problem or to term a matter administrative in nature than are private institution presidents and chairmen. The Yule's Q test shows an association of .237 between the fact that a president serves in a public institution and the likelihood that he or she will claim that a campus issue is administrative in nature.

Particular issues on the questionnaire show especially marked distinctions between public and private institutions. On Question #6, for example, dealing with the appointment of a dean by the president without faculty approval, sixteen of twenty-one respondent public presidents and twenty-three of thirty-one respondent public chairmen support presidential action, while twenty-two of thirty-three private presidents oppose administrative action and fifteen of twenty-four private chairmen are negative. Similarly, on question #10

dealing with a separate board financial review and audit, thirteen of twenty-three respondent public presidents and sixteen of thirty-one chairmen oppose this proposal, while eighteen of thirty-two private presidents and eighteen of twenty-four trustees support it. Public and private presidents split evenly as to whether this is a policy question, while seventeen of twenty-five public chairmen call it administrative and fifteen of nineteen private chairmen term it policy. The questionnaire data therefore indicate a greater tendency on the private side for chairmen and their boards to get involved in borderline questions of authority and on the part of their presidents to accommodate them. Public chairmen and presidents, on the other hand, guard the responsibilities of administration more carefully.

Why might public institution presidents and chairmen assert a greater degree of support for presidential action on campus problems? Some possible explanations lie in the smaller degree of ultimate responsibility public trustees have for the institution, making them less prone to dip into administrative problems; the relationship between the nature of institutions and the size of their boards; and the religious nature of certain private institutions.

In returning their questionnaires, the board chairmen of a number of private universities or colleges note that these institutions are church related. One such chairman,

in responding that the trustees should probably close down a "pornographic" art exhibit even when the president does not wish to do so (question #8), asserts that "since our college is church related, we need to be more concerned about a matter of this nature than a state college." Respondents from Roman Catholic institutions invariably answer in the negative on question #4, whether birth control devices should be dispensed without board approval. As one church college president responding to question #3 on dormitory curfews writes, it "depends on the college and its heritage and constituencies -- there are different implications for private church-related colleges and state colleges."

This distinction is certainly not a definitive one, for some public institution officials take similar positions on these social questions. The chairman of the board of a small public college indicates a feeling that trustees should be involved in the birth control decision, adding: "As I speak for a State college the question of public reaction should probably be resolved by the board." It should be noted, though, that the stated basis for this position is different, being set in the perspective of possible public reaction rather than in a belief framework.

Thus, while the importance of the church relationship as an explanation of the different nature of some private

colleges should not be overemphasized, it does exist. There is a much stronger tendency in church-related institutions for the board to get involved in controversial social questions. The nature of the institution makes a difference in these cases.

These comments apply to church-related private institutions, but not to all private institutions. There are other reasons offered by some questionnaire respondents for their answers which do seem more to distinguish public from private institutions as a class. The chairman of the board of a large public university declares, for instance, that his board need not conduct its own financial review and audit (question #10) because it is a public institution (and therefore has the resources of the state auditors available to it). On the other hand, the president of a small private college writes that the trustees probably should conduct their own separate budget review and audit because "these are board concerns and the board would be liable if there were a problem." Similarly, the president of a small private institution writes that he probably should not approve regulations on dormitory curfews without board consultation (question #3), as "regulations" should be forwarded to the board. Moreover, he declares, the board should be involved in the various stages of budgetmaking, because it has "ultimate responsibility." The board chairman of a relatively small

private college asserts that the president should involve the trustees in the development of a long-range institutional plan (question #2) because "the board is responsible for financing and other elements and should be involved in whatever plan is finally adopted."

A number of presidents and board chairmen of private institutions refer to the ultimate responsibility of the private board in advocating trustee involvement in a particular campus situation; therefore, while officials of public institutions are more prone to rely on state-level officials for back-up support and a sharing of ultimate responsibility. This distinction between public and private institutions should not be carried too far. All public institutions are not alike and private institutions are clearly different from one another. In addition to church-related institutions, experimental colleges, predominately black institutions, traditional liberal arts colleges, and urban universities have obvious distinctions as institutions.

Nevertheless, there are differences in kind between private institutions as a group and public ones. There are also elements of similarity in the trustee-president relationship within each overall category of institution, given the different authority frameworks within which they must operate.

The Size of the Board and the Public/Private Distinction

A major distinction between public and private institutions can be found with regard to the size of the board. While the size of the board is a separate component of this survey, it is related to the public/private dimension. A Pearson's correlation shows a substantial agreement (0.82) on the questionnaire responses between the nature of control over the institution (public/private) and the size of the board. This correlation should not be regarded as definitive, for it is taken from a scale created on the survey variables for another purpose and consequently has limited significance. The relationship is supported by other data, however. Charles A. Nelson and Frederick J. Turk[3] conducted a survey for the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities which indicated that approximately seventy percent of private boards have more than twenty members. Public boards are smaller, with practically all being under twenty in size. Public community college boards usually have fewer than ten members. Typical public institutions represented in the writer's survey had boards of thirteen fifteen, nine, thirty-two (a public institution with private roots), eight, and seven members, while typical private institutions in the survey had boards of thirty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-one, and twenty-nine.

The questionnaire results indicate that presidents working with boards over thirty tend to term a matter policy to a greater degree and are less inclined to act on an issue as contrasted with other presidents. Chairmen of large boards have a propensity to agree with this stance and a reluctance to support presidential action on campus issues. Presidents in institutions with smaller boards are more likely to term a matter administrative in nature and to receive trustee support for presidential action on it.

The obtained Yule's Q (.205) reveals a moderate association between size of board and presidential indication of a presidential action role, with presidents in institutions with boards up to ten members in size being more willing to act on campus problems. There is an association of .369 between size of board and presidential claims of administrative responsibility, with presidents working with boards under thirty more inclined to claim such responsibility. In addition, when the questionnaire data are subjected to an analysis of variance, trustee responses categorized by size of board show evidence of significance differences on the policy/administration issue ($F=3.70$, 2/63 df, $p < .05$)

Thus there is the small college president with a board of over thirty members who declared on question #10

that the board should probably conduct its own review and audit of the institutional budget, because "these are board concerns and the board would be liable if there were a problem." At the same time, the president of a large private university with a board of between twenty and thirty members notes that, "I am a firm believer in boards, but I'm also a firm believer in having them keep their hands off administrative levers. Board members are too busy, too distant and too preoccupied to make good day-by-day administrators." This president terms dormitory curfews (question #3) "housekeeping." The president of a small community college with a board of under ten members writes on question #3 that the president should not "bother the board on procedural matters that change often." One large public university president with a board between ten and twenty members goes so far as to assert flatly on question #2 that "long-range planning is the responsibility of the president." Speaking generally, presidents of institutions with small boards are more likely to comment on their prerogatives and the importance of keeping trustees out of administration and procedure than are their colleagues. The responses on question #6, the appointment of a dean, are typical of these patterns (See Table V).

The survey results on the size of the board as a factor in trustee-president relations coincide with the results on the nature of the institution. Presidents of public

TABLE V

Should the board approve the appointment of a Dean by the President when the faculty does not support the appointment?

		President Responses	Trustee Responses
The President's Appointment Should Be Approved	Board under 10	8-1	9-2
	10-20	8-6	14-6
	20-30	7-8	2-7
	Over 30	4-12	6-8
Policy Issue v. Administrative Matter	Board under 10	1-6	2-8
	10-20	2-9	4-12
	20-30	1-12	3-4
	Over 30	5-9	6-6

institutions claim greater responsibility for action on campus problems. So do presidents with small boards. Given the fact that small boards are more likely to be found in public institutions, the results are consistent.

The Size of the Institution

What other patterns can be discerned in the survey responses? Is enrollment or institutional size a factor of importance in the trustee-president relationship? The questionnaire data are not conclusive on this issue. They indicate a slightly greater tendency for presidents and chairmen in institutions of more than 5,000 students to declare that the president should act on a campus problem (See Table VI). When the questionnaire data are subjected to an analysis of variance, trustee responses categorized by enrollment show evidence of significant differences ($F = 4.19$, 2/63 df, $p < .05$) while presidential responses do not.

The Yule's Q test of association does not find any significant association between the size of the institution and presidential or board support scores. The strongest associations appear in presidential responses on the policy/administration question and trustee responses as to who should act. Presidents, when asked whether a matter is policy or administration, respond in such a way so that

TABLE VI

Responses By Size of Institution

Should the President (or the Board) Act on a Campus Problem?

(Total of individual responses to questions)

		President Responses	Trustee Responses
The President Should Act	Under 1,000	70.0%	60.8%
	1,000-5,000	68.0%	63.4%
	5,000-10,000	74.7%	68.7%
	Over 10,000	71.9%	68.7%

there is a relationship of 0.14 in the direction of presidents in institutions with over 10,000 students responding "policy." There is a similar relationship between trustees in institutions of over 5,000 students and a willingness to support presidential action. Neither of these relationships reach a level of significance.

When all these relationships are taken together, though, there is a weak, but inconclusive, pattern of greater support for presidential action in the larger schools, except for the Yule's Q association of presidential responses on policy/administration.

This pattern also appears in the comments respondents append to their questionnaires. In declaring that the board should probably approve the appointment of a dean who is not supported by the faculty when the president so requests (question #6), one large (over 10,000 student) private institution president declares that while this might "be hazardous for the president," he "certainly has the right to choose his senior administrative officials." On the other hand, as noted earlier, the president of a small private college writes that the trustees should probably conduct their own budget review and audit (question #10) on the grounds that these matters are "board concerns" and because of the possibility of board liability "if there were a problem."

Similarly, the chairman of a small public community college, in responding to question #9 dealing with the role of the board in budget making writes that it must be deeply involved because the "board is responsible." By the same token, this chairman responds that the trustees should conduct their own budget review and audit because "liability rests with the board." On these same two questions, a chairman of another small public community college writes that the board should participate in budget making because it "should not be presented with a 'fait accompli' on the budget document" and it should conduct its own financial review and audit because it is "ultimately responsible."

As noted earlier, the chairman of the board of a small public college indicates a feeling that the trustees should be involved in the birth control decision, adding, "As I speak for a State college the question of public reaction should probably be resolved by the board." This chairman also claims primacy in choosing targets for budgetary reduction (question #5), asserting that "in a State college the board has a public responsibility that must be recognized."

The chairman of the board of a relatively small (1000-5000) private college writes on his response, "I believe in a shared policy of governance," as he asserts that the president should not develop a long-range plan without trustee

involvement in the drafting process (question #2). This chairman also declares that the board should close a "pornographic" art exhibit against the president's wishes "in the interests of the institution" (question #8), that it should eliminate an academic department to save money even when the president disagrees (question #15), and that it should engage outside consultants on institutional direction without presidential support for this action, because this is "their responsibility" (question #11).

Finally, as noted earlier, the board chairman of another relatively small private college asserts that trustees should be involved in the development of a long-range institutional plan because "the board is responsible for financing and other elements...."

While the survey pattern on institutional size is weak, there are a number of indicators that presidential action on campus problems is more likely to occur and to receive trustee support in larger institutions. Chairmen of boards in small institutions seem particularly conscious of their prerogatives and authority on various subjects, including social, financial, and planning questions. As a result, presidents in large in titutions may have a tendency to operate with greater autonomy, whereas presidents of small colleges must live in a setting that permits more direct "dipping in" by the board.

The Experience of the President

Is the experience of the president or of the chairman a factor of importance in the trustee-president relationship? The evidence on the impact of trustee tenure lacks strength and is somewhat inconsistent, but the questionnaire responses do indicate that new presidents with little experience are more likely to assert a policy role and the right to act on certain issues. Their more experienced colleagues are less assertive (See Table VII). The Yule's Q test shows relationships between new presidents of .207 (up to six years in office) and of .155 (up to three years in office) and the presidential declaration of a matter as administrative. In one leading example of this, on question #6, dealing with the appointment of a dean, twenty-one of twenty-seven affirmative presidential responses are made by presidents with six years experience or less. These presidents produce only nine of twenty-seven negative replies.

Thus some of the substantive responses noted earlier in this paper. The new president of a small community college writes on question #3, dealing with dormitory curfews, that the president should not "bother the board on procedural matters" that are ephermeral. A new public university president asserts flatly on question #2 that "long-range planning is the responsibility of the president." A president of a large private university with three years

TABLE VII

Presidential Responses by Experience of President

(Total Responses to all Questions)

	Years Experience	Presidential Support Score
The President Should Act	1-3	72.7%
	4-6	71.0%
	7-9	72.9%
	10-12	69.2%
	13-15	65.6%
	16-19	68.3%
	20 & up	59.2%
Policy Issue v. Administrative Matter	1-3	39.4%
	4-6	41.5%
	7-9	46.3%
	10-12	43.1%
	13-15	75.0%
	16-19	57.4%
	20 & up	67.6%

experience writes that "I am a firm believer in boards, but I'm also a firm believer in having them keep their hands off administrative levers." [They]... are too busy, too distant and too preoccupied...."

What might explain these findings? An examination of the comments appended to the questionnaire returns by some respondents indicates a number of possible explanations. New presidents seem more protective of "their" turf, less willing to accept limits on their authority, and more likely to be on their "honeymoon" and therefore enjoying trustee support. Thus on question #3, approval of dormitory curfews, one president with two years experience notes that the board shouldn't be "bothered" on procedural matters. Presidents with greater experience have developed a more careful pattern of dealing with their boards and are less inclined to be overly assertive about their prerogatives. Experience does seem to make a difference for college and university presidents.

Level of Program Offerings: Two Years v. Four Years or More

Are community colleges different? Is the community college one in which the trustee-president relationship can be distinguished? The questionnaire findings on the community college as a factor in trustee-presidential relations are weak because of the small number of community colleges in the survey, but, as Table VIII indicates, presidents of two-year colleges do

TABLE VIII

Two-Year v. Four-Year Institutions

(Total Responses to all Questions)

		President Responses	Trustee Responses
The President Should Act	Two-Year	76.7%	63.1%
	Four-Year and Up	69.0%	65.1%
Policy Issue v. Administrative Matter	Two-Year	38.4%	37.4%
	Four-Year and Up	46.0%	47.7%

seem more likely than four-year presidents to assume responsibility for action on a campus problem. Two-year presidents and chairmen are also more likely to term a matter administrative. For example, on question #9 dealing with the stages of the budget-making process, seven of nine community college presidents oppose early board involvement, but only twenty-three of fifty of their four-year counterparts do so. The similar figures on question #10, dealing with a separate board budget review and audit, are seven of nine and twenty of forty-six.

Thus the response by the president of a small community college on question #3 on dormitory curfews that the president shouldn't "bother the board on procedural matters that change often." This president also responds that birth control on campus is an administrative decision, "unless you have a right to life" advocate... in the community."

On the other hand, we have the statement by the chairman of a small public community college, in responding to question #9 on budget making, that trustees must be deeply involved because "the board is responsible." This chairman also declares that the trustees should conduct their own financial review and audit (question #10), because "liability rests with the board." On these two questions, as noted earlier, the chairman of another small public community college

writes that the board "should not be presented with a 'fait accompli' on the budget document" and that it should conduct its own budget review and audit because it is "ultimately responsible."

All in all, then, the community college factor influences trustee-president authority relations in conflicting directions. The president typically has a tendency to act, although he may have some hesitancy to do so because of relevant community factors. While the survey responses by board chairmen seem to support presidential action, there is also a strong sense of responsibility to the public on the part of many chairmen, a sense that may be enhanced by the community nature of the institution. Potential for serious conflict exists here.

The Multi-Campus Factor

The writer does not have sufficient information to comment in any definitive way on the last questionnaire factor, whether an institution being part of a larger system makes a difference in board-president relations. System-related institutions total only a small portion of the survey sample. But the few comments appended to questionnaires on this matter indicate that the systems issue may operate as an external force to push the president and the local board, where one exists, into a closer working relationship. If this be so, the resulting need for cooperative patterns on campus stemming

from the existence of a systems board will significantly affect local trustee-president relations.

Conclusions

The survey results indicate particular patterns in trustee-president authority relationships. Presidents are more likely to assume responsibility for a campus issue if they are new and/or serving in a public institution, particularly a community college, with a small board of trustees. Board chairmen are more inclined to claim policy responsibility if they serve in private institutions with larger boards. There is also a slight tendency for presidents to act administratively in bigger institutions. Thus there may be a hierarchy among institutions on the role of the board in college and university management, with trustees playing the strongest role in institutional decisions in small private colleges with large boards and a more subsidiary role in large public institutions with small boards, especially community colleges or those with a relatively new president.

Comments added by many respondents to their questionnaires offer a number of reasons for this response pattern. Particular factors that may be more pertinent on smaller boards and in larger or in public institutions include the need for restraint by the board, the necessity for the trustees to show faith in the president, the importance of a cooperative

approach to management, and the difficulty of drawing a line between policy and administration.

A number of differences between presidents and board chairmen are concerned with the policy/administration dichotomy. But the survey responses indicate that perceptions by presidents and chairmen of what policy is and what administration is coincide just as much or more than they differ. When disagreements do occur, there are no simple or definitive answers on what is right and what should be done. Even the institution's by-laws are likely to be of minimal assistance in outlining procedures for dealing with issues involving questions of policy as well as elements of administration. In the final analysis, these issues are likely to be complicated enough to make attempts to achieve an exact division of responsibility a fruitless exercise.

Consequently, efforts to clarify the policy-administration distinction are overshadowed by the need to develop between the president and the board chairman a positive relationship based on reciprocal trust and respect. Many respondent presidents and chairmen emphasize the importance of personality and the need for a good relationship between them for institutional decision-making and well-being. Both chairmen and presidents declare that the authority relationship joining them is often so unclear that maximum joint effort,

involving mutual respect and good will, is required to ensure success. Teamwork and a cooperative relationship between the board and the president are essential to making viable policy and administrative decisions.

Conclusions about structure and patterns must be understood in a framework that rests on the importance of personalities. As people interact with one another, the patterns which develop mandate the nature of the trustee-president relationship to a greater extent than anything else does. While this survey indicates that structural and experiential factors have significance in the relationship, a wise president or chairman will make every conceivable effort to relate personally to his opposite number in such a way as to advance mutually desirable goals and thus serve the best interests of the institution.

References:

[1]Simon, Herbert A. Administrative Behavior. Second ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1957, p. 54.

[2]Cleary, Robert E. "Trustee-President Authority Relations." Educational Record, 60 (Spring 1979), pp. 146-158. The author wishes to acknowledge the continuing assistance of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges in this survey. The study could not have been carried out without the AGB's help.

[3]Nelson, Charles A., and Frederick J. Turk. "Facts About Governing Boards: Results of a Survey." Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company, 1973. (Mimeographed).